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THEOSOPHY

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY

THE STUDY OF OCCULT SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY, AND ARYAN LITERATURE

Vol. XXXIX—No. 9 **July, 1951**

THE inner knowledge is to be gained, first, by a recognition of the inner powers and faculties of man and the One Self in all beings, and second, by basing our thought and action upon that recognition. If we live the life, we will know the doctrine. A mere intellectual assent to the philosophy will not bring knowledge; we must live what we know or feel to be true, then we will know. The Three Fundamentals of the Secret Doctrine not only give us the key to all existences, but to the root and sustainer of these, the One Self in all; the more we supplant the lower self by the Higher, the more universal does our viewpoint become, and the powers that belong to each succeeding step towards universality unfold themselves and find their field of action. —R. C.

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1875 - 1950

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Revised and largely rewritten in the light of another quarter century of theosophical activities, this book will furnish newcomer and student alike with the materials for estimating the life and work of H. P. Blavatsky and Wm. Q. Judge, and the course of events in the Theosophical Society they founded—with Col. H. S. Olcott—in 1875. The bifurcations and schisms which began while the Founders were still on the scene, and multiplied considerably afterward, are here traced with the help of the principles set forth in the theosophical literature itself, so that the reader has the evidence from which to decide for himself what may be the meaning of the present theosophical movement. It is felt that just as Theosophy is a world-philosophy, so the Theosophical Movement, wherever it is to be discerned, is the cause of humanity, first, last, and all the time, and as such has a claim upon the attention of theosophists and non-theosophists alike.

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Who knows the Soul, and sees himself as it—what should he long for, or desiring what should he fret for the fever of life? —*Song of Life*

THEOSOPHY

Vol. XXXIX **July, 1951** **No. 9**

THEOSOPHY AND ITS ADEPTS

THE Theosophical Movement of 1875 undertook a supremely difficult work—the task of presenting the reality of Masters of Wisdom to a generation which regarded wise men as myths or as personal saviors, or denied their existence altogether. The Western world had many philosophies, but the line of philosophical heredity was broken and twisted to the eye. Philosophy itself had no brotherhood of expounders: rather, the spectacle presented was that of a market-place of ideas, wherein each keeper of a booth vied with all the others in merchandizing his wares. There was, supposedly, one "true" religion, but hundreds of sects warred among themselves over which special creed owned exclusive rights to the title, and Religion itself was completely obscured by sectarian claims and dogmas. Science was a rising tide of inquiry, but no one seemed to know how far the questioning intellect of man would or could penetrate into ancient darknesses. The relation of knowledge to Science was itself a mystery. Could psychological and philosophical knowledge have existed before being sought by empirical means, and if it did exist for some of the great ancients, where, how, *in what mind or minds?* Philosophy, Religion, Science—were these unreal abstractions, or actually the names for sister truths? Above all, how is one to know *the* Science, *the* Religion, *the* Philosophy?

The Theosophical Movement suggested a new approach to the problem of certainty, a new way—which yet was extremely ancient—to pursue the quest for knowledge. Theosophy drew to notice the truth of the common feeling that a higher Knowledge exists, but

added that if so, there are the Knowers of it. Further, if there is a road to Knowledge, that road has been travelled and traced *by the Knowers.* Also, if such Knowledge is beneficial to mankind, it is for each man to seek and, by the same token, the keepers of such truths will naturally be moved to help the searcher. That those acquainted with the synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy should have greater power to benefit their fellows, is another corollary of the original proposition, and wise in his generation is the student who does not presume to direct or limit the means employed for his education—even when, as might be expected, the methods used are sometimes unfamiliar, strange, peculiar, or disturbing. Finally, the logic of the existence of Wise Men leads the grateful and aspiring mind to perceive that the road to Knowledge consists, in human terms, of a series of links. One does not engage an Einstein to supervise the first lessons in arithmetic: in preparing to fathom the wisdom of man and nature, one begins with the teacher nearest at hand, confident that when his progress warrants the attention of greater teachers, he will discover how they may be approached.

To trace, in theosophical history, how the central purposes of the Movement gradually unfolded, is not without value. Nor is such a study difficult, for the whole course of development is plainly marked in theosophical literature. *Isis Unveiled* is a major landmark, the culmination of several years devoted by H. P. Blavatsky to public discussion in newspapers and magazines. *Isis* begins directly with mention of Wise Men, *accessible teachers.* The substance of this first book of H.P.B.'s is the recital of evidence and testimony to the occult powers in man, to unknown properties of mind and matter, and to the wealth of human experience left unexplained for the average man of this era. In other ages, in older lands, she shows, human understanding had not been so meagre; the mind of man roamed more spacious realms of learning, and scaled higher peaks of knowledge in the fruition of certain special cycles of opportunity. It might be feared that ancient science died with its practitioners, that ancient philosophy survived no better than did its records, that ancient religion was lost to modern man just as if it were a land beneath the sea. *Isis Unveiled* affirmed the contrary and declared the continuing existence of the brotherhood of Knowers, their willingness to instruct determined pupils, and their accessibility to any dis-

ciple who faithfully followed the road to Knowledge, traveling the path taken by his predecessors.

At the time *Isis Unveiled* was written, the phenomena of Spiritualism had been stirring the Western mind for over three decades with hints of man's occult powers and intimations of other planes of consciousness. First, in 1840, a few men here and there took note of strange psychic events, but the number grew, and by 1875 a conservative estimate of those interested in Spiritualism was given as fifteen million. What Spiritualistic phenomena had done for the credulous mind, *Isis Unveiled* did for the serious and open mind: it assembled myriads of separate wonders to puzzle and intrigue the understanding. But *Isis* did more. The undercurrent of H. P. Blavatsky's discussion had always been the possibility of subjecting every occurrence—however miraculous or mystifying it seemed—to rational explanation, and *Isis* ended with a magnificent summary of the principles of magic, the missing *science* of man's identity with nature. "MAGIC," wrote H.P.B., "is spiritual WISDOM; nature, the material ally, pupil and servant of the magician."

Leaving *Isis Unveiled* to work its leaven in the mind of the West, H. P. Blavatsky repaired to the Orient. No need, in India, to point out psychological realities untouched by Western theories and speculations. The West might have millions of spiritualists, but the phenomena of Spiritualism were comparatively rare, and confined, for the most part, to persons of a certain temperament who performed under certain conditions, and for a limited number of observers. The East generally, and India in particular, could be said to have millions of psychic phenomena available for consideration, since psychic faculties are almost a normal part of human nature among Oriental peoples. In India, moreover, the idea of Wise Men—Mahatmas, in the Sanscrit language—was a living tradition. Yet in India, also, the quest for knowledge had slackened. The *Mahatmas,* it was said, had retired, and in the Dark Age very little could be accomplished in the way of spiritual development.

The Theosophist, under H. P. Blavatsky's direction, set itself to attract minds for whom psychic phenomena were neither objects of amazement nor of indifference, who sought a rationale—a *science* of occultism. The pages of the theosophical magazine in India opened out for readers a series of remarkable manifestations of *human*

powers and capacities, and, while attempting no immediate explanations, the Editors promised that "Before we have done with our readers, it will be made very clear that every story of ghost, goblin, and *bhuta,* admitted to our columns, has the value of an illustration of some one phase of that misconceived but most important science, Psychology." It was not long until a physician in England presented the case of "a gentleman who, since attending some Spiritualistic 'circles' to witness the strange phenomenon of 'Materialization,' has been obsessed by an evil influence or 'bad spirit,' despite his efforts to throw it off." This was the occasion of H. P. Blavatsky's article, "A Case of Obsession"—the first of many demonstrations of the practical necessity for what H.P.B. there calls "that most beneficent science, Magnetism or Mesmerism." Side by side with instances of occult powers and psychic happenings drawn from Western literature and experience, and from the newspapers of the day, *The Theosophist,* from its first issue, published articles describing Yoga Vidya, the Sacred Science, or archaic Occultism. "It cannot be denied," the Editors remarked, that "modern magnetism makes it easy to understand ancient Yoga Vidya."

Less than a year after starting publication, *The Theosophist* printed a brief memorandum on the Rahats or Rishis, quoting Buddhistical scriptures to refute the popular notion that "the term for the manifestation of the highest grades of *rahatship* has expired." On the contrary, as one poetic affirmation has it:

> As a pond is kept filled up with water by the continual pouring of rain; as a conflagration is kept up by feeding the fire with dry wood; as a glass is lustred by frequent cleaning; even so by the invariable observance of the enjoined devotional rules, and by indefatigable exertion to lead a pure life on the part of the priesthood, the world will not be devoid of Rahats.

When critics of *The Theosophist* made sport of the Editors' accompanying reference to having met in Ceylon "those who had quite recently encountered such holy men," a more detailed account was provided, in the course of which the Editors declare, "We affirmed and repeat that neither in India, Egypt, nor Ceylon, has this ancient wisdom died out, and if we believe that there still survive its adepts and initiates, it is because we speak from personal knowledge and not hearsay."

What that personal knowledge was, began now to be disclosed. Succeeding issues of *The Theosophist* printed an address by Col. H. S. Olcott, in which the Society's president recounted his progress from Spiritualism to Theosophy; his introduction, through H.P.B., to "Asiatic Occultism as a science"; the demonstrations he had witnessed of H.P.B.'s power to duplicate *at will* all the phenomena of mediumship; and, finally, how "in America, more than an hundred times, upon opening letters upon various subjects coming to me by the common post from my correspondents in all parts of the world, [I] have found inside, written in their own familiar hand, messages to me from men in India who possess the theosophical knowledge of natural law." Concurrently, there appeared the account, reprinted from A. P. Sinnett's newspaper, *The Pioneer,* of H.P.B.'s "brooch phenomenon" at Simla, in October, 1880. This was one of the "amazing feats of magic," as Wm. Q. Judge termed them, which induced Sinnett to attempt to contact H.P.B.'s Mahatmas—"the Brothers," they were then called—from whom he received the great letters around which he built his book, *The Occult World.*

Less than two years after the establishment of the Theosophical Society, H. P. Blavatsky produced *Isis Unveiled;* now, less than two years after arriving in India, she had supplied the background for the second major contribution to theosophical literature, and if as Mr. Sinnett declared, "The book 'Isis' is in fact as great a 'phenomenon'—apart from the nature of its contents—as any" performed in India, it is also true that the Adept letters of *The Occult World* provided a still greater (and more subtle) evidence of H.P.B.'s occult powers. Not known at the time, and hardly admitted by Sinnett himself, was the fact, later disclosed, that the Adept letters to Sinnett and Hume came "through" H.P.B., with the aid of her presence, and by reason of her rapport, her "occult communication," with her Himalayan associates.

Doubtless there are students of Theosophy who tend to deprecate the fact of Masters of Wisdom, who cannot contemplate philosophically what theosophical doctrine teaches—the reality of Beings who represent, in their own persons, the future possibilities of general human evolution. Even so did the Hindus in H.P.B.'s day scoff at the notion of *"living, human Mahatmas"* with agents at work in the world during Kali Yuga. Again, precipitated letters, occult

telegraphy, and astral telephones are often treated by superficial minds with an amused tolerance, a condescending indulgence, as befits fables told to children. This, despite the several discussions, by both H. P. Blavatsky and Wm. Q. Judge, of the occult arts and their scientific explanation. At the same time, among other theosophical groups, the Masters of Wisdom have been grossly caricatured as "personal gods," their names taken in vain to promote psychic fancies and "new instructions." To offset the influence of both deprecators and sentimentalists, a study of the original theosophical literature is of first importance. In the present instance, the letters presented in *The Occult World* refute, by their intrinsic power and wisdom, every mean suspicion about those whom Mme. Blavatsky named the true founders of the present Theosophical Movement; they establish the Tibetan Brotherhood as philosopher-humanitarians on a scale far higher than even that of the noble thinkers revered in both East and West—Lincoln and Gandhi, Plato and Shakespeare, Confucius and Thomas Paine.

Since *The Occult World* has long been out of print, THEOSOPHY presents its readers with the famous correspondence which so profoundly moved the theosophical world, seventy years ago.

THE "S. D."—FIRST OF MANY

Had no theosophical and mystic literature obtained a hearing for the few last years, the present work would have had a poor chance of impartial consideration. But when it becomes undeniably proven that the claim of the modern Asiatic nations to a Secret Science and an esoteric history of the world, is based on fact; that, though hitherto unknown to the masses and a veiled mystery even to the learned (because they never had the key to a right understanding of the abundant hints thrown out by the ancient classics), it is still no fairy tale, but an actuality—then the present work will become but the pioneer of many more such books. The statement that hitherto even the keys discovered by some great scholars have proved too rusty for use, and that they were but the silent witnesses that there do exist mysteries behind the veil which are unreachable without a new key —is borne out by too many proofs to be easily dismissed.

—*The Secret Doctrine*

FROM "THE OCCULT WORLD"

I

[A. P. Sinnett's book begins by contrasting occult and modern science, the author attempting to explain the policy of secrecy and retirement characteristic of advanced occultists. From his own experience, Sinnett is able to assure his readers that, far from desiring to prove their powers or advertise their knowledge, the members of the Adept fraternity purposely avoid all publicity. In *The Occult World,* Sinnett emphasizes, it is *he*—not the Adepts—who is trying to convince the world of their existence and win a hearing for their philosophy.

Relating several phenomena performed at his Simla home during a six-week visit of H.P.B. and Col. Olcott (September-October, 1880), Sinnett tell how H.P.B. spoke of "the Brothers," attributing the phenomena to their power over space, time, mind, and matter, and always consulting them by mental "telephone" before attempting a demonstration. Knowing the "intricate suspiciousness" of the ordinary mind when confronted with the extraordinary, Sinnett devotes himself to showing, in great detail, all possible ways by which this or that phenomenon of H.P.B.'s could *not* have been fraudulent. But he was nevertheless determined to devise an infallible "proof" of Adept power. The test he proposed will seem the more ingenious when it is remembered that in his day the telephone and telegraph were still matters of hearsay to the average man. Today, when teletype, radio, and television have duplicated mechanically the instantaneous communication-at-a-distance common between the Mahatmas and H.P.B., it still makes for wonderment that proficients in occult science do with trained human faculties what modern science needs elaborate instruments to perform. At the same time, other modern inventions have fully justified the reluctance of the Adepts to circulate more specific knowledge of the occult arts.

We extract from *The Occult World* the Mahatma's correspondence, with some of Sinnett's accompanying narrative.—Eds. THEOS.]

ONE day, therefore, I asked Madame Blavatsky whether if I wrote a letter to one of the Brothers explaining my views, she could get it delivered for me. I hardly thought this was probable, as I knew how very unapproachable the Brothers generally are; but as she said that at any rate she would try, I wrote a letter,

addressing it "to the Unknown Brother," and gave it to her to see if any result would ensue. . . . The idea I had specially in my mind when I wrote the letter. . . , was that of all test phenomena one could wish for, the best would be the production in our presence in India of a copy of the London *Times* of that day's date. With such a piece of evidence in my hand, I argued, I would undertake to convert everybody in Simla who was capable of linking two ideas together, to a belief in the possibility of obtaining by occult agency physical results which were beyond the control of ordinary science. . . .

A day or two elapsed before I heard anything of the fate of my letter, but Madame Blavatsky then informed me that I was to have an answer. . . . Hearing this, I at once regretted that I had not written at greater length, arguing my view of the required concession more fully. I wrote again, therefore, without waiting for the actual receipt of the expected letter.

A day or two after, I found one evening on my writing-table the first letter sent me by my new correspondent. I may here explain, what I learned afterwards, that he was a native of the Punjab who was attracted to occult studies from his earliest boyhood. He was sent to Europe while still a youth at the intervention of a relative—himself an occultist—to be educated in Western knowledge, and since then has been fully initiated in the greater knowledge of the East. From the self-complacent point of view of the ordinary European this will seem a strange reversal of the proper order of things, but I need not stop to examine that consideration now. My correspondent is known to me as the Mahatma Koot Hoomi. . . .

The letter I received began, *in medias res,* about the phenomena I had professed. "Precisely," the Mahatma wrote, "because the test of the London newspaper would close the mouths of the sceptics," it was inadmissable. "See it in what light you will, the world is yet in its first stage of disenthralment . . . hence unprepared. Very true we work by natural, not supernatural, means and laws. But as on the one hand science would find itself unable, in its present state, to account for the wonders given in its name, and on the other the ignorant masses would still be left to view the phenomenon in the light of a miracle, everyone who would thus be made a witness to the occurrence would be thrown off his balance, and the result would be deplorable. Believe me it would be so especially for yourself, who originated the

idea, and for the devoted woman who so foolishly rushes into the wide, open door leading to notoriety. This door, though opened by so friendly a hand as yours, would prove very soon a trap—and a fatal one, indeed, for her. And such is not surely your object. . . .

"Were we to accede to your desires, know you really what consequences would follow in the trail of success? The inexorable shadow which follows all human innovations moves on, yet few are they who are ever conscious of its approach and dangers. What are, then, they to expect who would offer the world an innovation which, owing to human ignorance, if believed in, will surely be attributed to those dark agencies the two-thirds of humanity believe in and dread as yet? . . . The success of an attempt of such a kind as the one you propose must be calculated and based upon a thorough knowledge of the people around you. It depends entirely upon the social and moral conditions of the people in their bearing on these deepest and most mysterious questions which can stir the human mind—the deific powers in man and the possibilities contained in Nature. How many even of your best friends, of those who surround you, are more than superficially interested in these abstruse problems? You could count them upon the fingers of your right hand. Your race boasts of having liberated in their century the genius so long imprisoned in the narrow vase of dogmatism and intolerance—the genius of knowledge, wisdom, and free thought. It says that, in their turn, ignorant prejudice and religious bigotry, bottled up like the wicked *djin* of old, and sealed by the Solomons of science, rest at the bottom of the sea, and can never, escaping to the surface again, reign over the world as in the days of old: that the public mind is quite free, in short, and ready to accept any demonstrated truth.

"Ay, but is it verily so, my respected friend? Experimental knowledge does not quite date from 1662, when Bacon, Robert Boyle, and the Bishop of Chester transformed under the royal charter their 'invisible college' into a society for the promotion of experimental science. Ages before the Royal Society found itself becoming a reality upon the plan of the 'Prophetic Scheme,' an innate longing for the hidden, a passionate love for, and study of, Nature, had led men in every generation to try and fathom her secrets deeper than their neighbors did. *Roma ante Romulum fuit* [Rome was, before Romulus] is an axiom taught us in your English schools. . . . The *Vril* of

the *Coming Race* was the common property of races now extinct. And as the very existence of those gigantic ancestors of ours is now questioned—though in the Himavats, on the very territory belonging to you, we have a cave full of the skeletons of these giants—and their huge frames, when found, are invariably regarded as isolated freaks of Nature—so the *vril,* or *akas* as we call it, is looked upon as an impossibility—a myth. And without a thorough knowledge of *akas*—its combinations and properties, how can science hope to account for such phenomena?

"We doubt not but the men of your science are open to conviction; yet facts must be first demonstrated to them; they must first have become their own property, have proved amenable to their modes of investigation, before you find them ready to admit them as facts. If you but look into the preface to the *Micrographia* you will find, in Hookes' suggestions, that the intimate relations of objects were of less account in his eyes than their external operation on the senses, and Newton's fine discoveries found in him their greatest opponent. The modern Hookeses are many. Like this learned but ignorant man of old, your modern men of science are less anxious to suggest a physical connection of facts which might unlock for them many an occult force in Nature, than to provide a convenient classification of scientific experiments, so that the most essential quality of a hypothesis is, not that it should be *true,* but only *plausible,* in their opinion.

"So far for science—as much as we know of it. As for human nature in general, it is the same now as it was a million years ago. Prejudice, based upon selfishness, a general unwillingness to give up an established order of things for new modes of life and thought—and occult study requires all that and much more—pride and stubborn resistance to truth, if it but upsets their previous notions of things—such are the characteristics of your age. . . . What, then, would be the results of the most astounding phenomena, supposing we consented to have them produced? However successful, danger would be growing proportionately with success. No choice would soon remain but to go on, ever *crescendo,* or to fall in this endless struggle with prejudice and ignorance, killed by your own weapons. Test after test would be required, and would have to be furnished; every subsequent phenomenon expected to be more marvellous than the preceding one. Your daily remark is, that one cannot be expected to believe unless he be-

comes an eye-witness. Would the lifetime of a man suffice to satisfy the whole world of sceptics?

"It may be an easy matter to increase the original number of believers at Simla to hundreds and thousands. But what of the hundreds of millions of those who could not be made eye-witnesses? The ignorant, unable to grapple with the invisible operators, might some day vent their rage on the visible agents at work; the higher and educated classes would go on disbelieving, as ever, tearing you to shreds as before. In common with many, you blame us for our great secrecy. Yet we know something of human nature, for the experience of long centuries—ay, ages, has taught us. And we know that so long as science has anything to learn, and a shadow of religious dogmatism lingers in the hearts of the multitudes, the world's prejudices have to be conquered step by step, not at a rush. As hoary antiquity had more than one Socrates, so the dim future will give birth to more than one martyr. Enfranchised Science contemptuously turned away her face from the Copernican opinion renewing the theories of Aristarchus Samius, who 'affirmeth that the earth moveth circularly about her own centre,' years before the Church sought to sacrifice Galileo as a *holocaust* to the Bible. The ablest mathematician at the Court of Edward VI., Robert Recorde, was left to starve in jail by his colleagues, who laughed at his *Castle of Knowledge,* declaring his discoveries vain phantasies. Wm. Gilbert of Colchester—Queen Elizabeth's physician—died poisoned, only because—this real founder of experimental science in England—has had the audacity of anticipating Galileo; of pointing out Copernicus' fallacy as to the 'third movement,' which was gravely alleged to account for the parallelism of the earth's axis of rotation! The enormous learning of the Paracelsi, of the Agrippas and the Deys was ever doubted. It was science which laid her sacrilegious hand upon the great work 'De Magnete' —'The Heavenly White Virgin' *(Akas)* and others. And it was the illustrious 'Chancellor of England and of Nature'—Lord Verulam-Bacon—who having won the name of the Father of Inductive Philosophy, permitted himself to speak of such men as the above-named as the 'Alchemicians of the Fantastic philosophy.'

"All this is old history, you will think. Verily so, but the chronicles of our modern days do not differ very essentially from their predecessors. And we have but to bear in mind the recent persecutions of

mediums in England, the burning of supposed witches and sorcerers in South America, Russia, and the frontiers of Spain, to assure ourselves that the only salvation of the genuine proficient in occult sciences lies in the scepticism of the public: the charlatans and the jugglers are the natural shields of the adepts. The public safety is only ensured by our keeping secret the terrible weapons which might otherwise be used against it, and which, as you have been told, become deadly in the hands of the wicked and selfish."

* * * * *

I [Sinnett] replied to the letter above quoted at some length, arguing, if I remember rightly, that the European mind was less hopelessly intractable than Koot Hoomi represented it. His second letter was as follows:—

"We will be at cross purposes in our correspondence until it has been made entirely plain that occult science has its own methods of research, as fixed and arbitrary as the methods of its antithesis, physical science, are in their way. If the latter has its dicta, so also have the former; and he who would cross the boundary of the unseen world can no more prescribe how he will proceed, than the traveller who tries to penetrate to the inner subterranean recesses of L'Hassa the Blessed could show the way to his guide. The mysteries never were, never can be, put within the reach of the general public, not, at least, until that longed-for day when our religious philosophy becomes universal. At no time have more than a scarcely appreciable minority of men possessed Nature's secret, though multitudes have witnessed the practical evidences of the possibility of their possession. The adept is the rare efflorescence of a generation of inquirers; and to become one, he must obey the inward impulse of his soul, irrespective of the prudential considerations of worldly science or sagacity.

"Your desire is to be brought to communicate with one of us directly, without the agency of either Madame Blavatsky or any medium. Your idea would be, as I understand it, to obtain such communications, either by letters, as the present one, or by audible words, so as to be guided by one of us in the management, and principally in the instruction of the Society. You seek all this, and yet, as you say yourself, hitherto you have not found sufficient reasons to even give up your modes of life, directly hostile to such modes of communication. This is hardly reasonable. He who would lift up high the

banner of mysticism and proclaim its reign near at hand must give the example to others. He must be the first to change his modes of life, and, regarding the study of the occult mysteries as the upper step in the ladder of knowledge, must loudly proclaim it such, despite exact science and the opposition of society. 'The kingdom of Heaven is obtained by force,' say the Christian mystics. It is but with armed hand, and ready to either conquer or perish, that the modern mystic can hope to achieve his object.

"My first answer covered, I believe, most of the questions contained in your second and even third letter. Having, then, expressed therein my opinion that the world in general was unripe for any too staggering proof of occult power, there but remains to deal with the isolated individuals who seek, like yourself, to penetrate behind the veil of matter into the world of primal causes—*i.e.,* we need only consider now the cases of yourself and Mr. Hume."

I [Sinnett] should explain that one of my friends at Simla, deeply interested with me in the progress of this investigation, had, on reading Koot Hoomi's first letter to me, addressed my correspondent himself. More favourably circumstanced than I, for such an enterprise, he had even proposed to make a complete sacrifice of his other pursuits, to pass away into any distant seclusion which might be appointed for the purpose, where he might, if accepted as a pupil in occultism, learn enough to return to the world armed with powers which would enable him to demonstrate the realities of spiritual development and the errors of modern materialism, and then devote his life to the task of combating modern incredulity and leading men to a practical comprehension of a better life. I resume the letter:—

"This gentleman also has done me the great honour to address me by name, offering to me a few questions, and stating the conditions upon which he would be willing to work for us seriously. But your motives and aspirations being of diametrically opposite character, and hence leading to different results, I must reply to each of you separately.

"The first and chief consideration in determining us to accept or reject your offer lies in the inner motive which propels you to seek our instruction and, in a certain sense, our guidance; the latter in all cases under reserve, as I understand it, and therefore remaining a question independent of aught else. Now, what are your motives?

I may try to define them in their general aspects, leaving details for further consideration. They are—(1) the desire to see positive and unimpeachable proofs that there really are forces in Nature of which science knows nothing; (2) the hope to appropriate them some day —the sooner the better, for you do not like to wait—so as to enable yourself *(a)* to demonstrate their existence to a few chosen Western minds, *(b)* to contemplate future life as an objective reality built upon the rock of knowledge, not of faith, and *(c)* to finally learn—most important this, among all your motives, perhaps, though the most occult and the best guarded—the whole truth about our lodges and ourselves; to get, in short, the positive assurance that the 'Brothers,' of whom everyone hears so much and sees so little, are real entities, not fictions of a disordered, hallucinated brain. Such, viewed in their best light, appear to us your motives for addressing me. And in the same spirit do I answer them, hoping that my sincerity will not be interpreted in a wrong way, or attributed to anything like an unfriendly spirit.

"To our minds, then, these motives, sincere and worthy of every serious consideration from the worldly standpoint, appear *selfish.* (You have to pardon me what you might view as crudeness of language, if your desire is that which you really profess—to learn truth and get instruction from us who belong to quite a different world from the one you move in.) They are selfish, because you must be aware that the chief object of the Theosophical Society is not so much to gratify individual aspirations as to serve our fellow-men, and the real value of this term 'selfish,' which may jar upon your ear, has a peculiar significance with us which it cannot have with you; therefore, to begin with, you must not accept it otherwise than in the former sense. Perhaps you will better appreciate our meaning when told that in our view the highest aspirations for the welfare of humanity become tainted with selfishness, if, in the mind of the philanthropist, there lurks the shadow of a desire for self-benefit, or a tendency to do injustice, even where these exist unconsciously to himself. Yet you have ever discussed, but to put down, the idea of a Universal Brotherhood, questioned its usefulness, and advised to remodel the Theosophical Society on the principle of a college for the special study of occultism. This, my respected and esteemed friend and brother—will never do!"

KERNELS OF WISDOM

"The reward of unlawful pleasure is lawful pain."

ONE of the first marks of decline in the course of human civilization is a growing sense of irresponsibility in men for the things that happen in society and in their own lives. Willingly and without complaint we accept the pleasures and privileges of life, as though they were the natural heritage of the human race, the indisputable right of every living soul. The question of whether such blessings are deserved or not, or of the need for gratitude to those through whom they come, seems never to disturb the serenity of complacent, self-righteous minds. But when sorrows and troubles arise, and the tide of life washes up to our feet experiences that are difficult to meet, it is an altogether different matter. Not only do we question and complain—*we rebel,* and in many instances accuse Great Nature of being fickle, cruel, unjust. Upon the approach of trial, we oftentimes put ourselves in such states of mental and psychic unbalance that it becomes practically impossible to see our true duty, and to learn the lessons which the events of life invariably hold. "Why should this happen to me?" we say. "Why is it that others, far less worthy than I, experience only pleasure and good times, while I am made to suffer?" As proof of the fact that these questions are put from the lower, selfish parts of our natures, it is to be noted that we seldom complain about the miseries of other people. Friends and acquaintances may go through the most trying of circumstances, may suffer mercilessly at the hands of fate, without even a murmer of protest from us, so long as we ourselves are healthy, happy and well fed.

According to the American Declaration of Independence, it is the inalienable right of every human being to engage in the "pursuit of happiness." This wonderful promise of freedom has been interpreted by some to mean that every single individual, every living citizen, without exception, is *entitled* to happiness, regardless of whether the blessing is deserved or not. But how can this be so? How can a man expect to experience peace and contentment of mind without having first set in motion the causes that lead to the effect?

How can any person enjoy happiness while others suffer, and without a feeling of responsibility for the needs of those around him? Man's only right, in the eyes of Karma, and even in the eyes of the Declaration of Independence, once it is correctly understood, is the right to *pursue* happiness, the right to perform such acts, to live such life, to set up such causes, in short, as shall result eventually in the condition of mind he wishes to achieve. Otherwise, however much one may take his privileges for granted, however much he may *expect* as a free American citizen, sorrow, despair and disappointment will be his lot.

One of the greatest delusions of our age is the belief that peace, freedom and happiness can be legislated by law, that all that is required for the attainment of Nature's grandest prize, is the signing of a document, the demanding of a right, the expression of a desire. But a desire, says Wm. Q. Judge, "is not a condition," and what we have to do it to create the condition through which the effects we wish to accomplish may flow.

Few individuals stop to consider the means by which true happiness can be attained. Few seem to realize that there is such a thing as *unlawful* as well as lawful pleasure, that with the inalienable right to pursue happiness comes also a certain inalienable responsibility—a responsibility for the well-being of others. The Laws of Divine Humanity which nourish and sustain a man throughout the whole of his life will not allow him to long continue his round of selfish desire. The Laws of Universal Brotherhood weld all things and beings in the Kosmos into a common community of souls, and any pleasures gained selfishly or to the hurt of others are unlawful, and will result ultimately in sorrow, pain and *dis*-pleasure. The privileges growing out of the bond of brotherhood are simply one side of the coin, the other being that of duty and responsibility.

The reward of unlawful pleasure is always lawful pain. Why do we consider our pleasures to be right and just and our pains to be cruel and extremely unjust? Is it because we take the position of separateness, because we labor under the belief that the world owes us happiness and that anything that interferes is unlawful? Not until men gain some concept of universal Law or Karma will they come to see that it is impossible to act selfishly, inconsiderate of the good of others, without a lawful rebuff from Life.

Since the founding of the present Theosophical Movement in 1875, millions of people, perhaps, have heard of the doctrine of *Karma.* Of this number, thousands have given the idea some thought—at least to the extent that, in their eyes, it is the only logical explanation of the many mysteries of life. But how many individuals, among those who accept the doctrine theoretically, apply it as a key to their own lives? How many see it as the cause for their birth, with whatever it holds of weal or woe? How many actually *use* the Law, just as they would a principle of physics or chemistry, for the purpose of correcting faults in themselves, of remedying defects, and of strengthening character? Once Karma is applied thus, each event, however painful or pleasurable, becames the lawful working-out of Divine Justice.

Karma is said to be the law of equilibrium and harmony in which the universe rests, or is sustained. Having its roots in Spirit, which is the divine essence of all things and beings, whether of an atom, a solar system, a mosquito, or a man, and operating through the Divine Ideation of Universal Mind, its adjustments are always effected from the point of view of the Whole. How else can equal justice be achieved? Karma knows neither preference nor enmity, for on the plane of its repose all things and beings are one. And the man who learns its ways and works with it finds a friend more trustworthy than the most faithful of relationships between men. The co-worker with Nature experiences a joy far above and beyond the usual kamic or emotional pleasures of sense. He has learned the magic formula of conforming his ways and wills to the pleasure and disposition of the Divine Will. Work for the principle of Universal Brotherhood results ultimately in peace and everlasting joy.

Imagine, for the sake of illustration, that the great spiritual plane of consciousness is a universal Ocean of Water, extending everywhere and interpenetrating all things and beings, and that Karma, or the Law of Harmony, is the tendency in that Ocean to restore calm and equilibrium. And let the physical plane on which we live and move be represented by that portion of the Ocean which is visible to our sight—that is, the surface, with its waves and ripples, and whatever floating objects there may be. In the attempt to restore harmony in our lives, most of us unfortunately concern ourselves exclusively with the waves and ripples, with the multiform objects

of debris as they bob up and down upon the surging sweep of time. Ignoring the vast depths of man's invisible nature, and its fundamental identity with the Soul of Humanity, with whatever It feels from the winds of fate, we quibble with effects. How is it possible to calm a floating log on the water, so long as the Ocean itself is disturbed? How can a single unit of the race go into a state of bliss or personal salvation while others suffer?

Knowledge of the Law of Karma leads men to see that they cannot violate the principle of unity and progress, that it is impossible to live in the pleasure-grounds of sense without doing injury, both to themselves and to others, and that any infringement of the purposes of Soul, however personally enjoyable, can but lead to pain.

Might it be that one reason why we are so expecting, so demanding of our rights to personal pleasure, is that we have taken for granted all the natural beneficent privileges of Universal Brotherhood, without realizing that something is due in return? "He who, sinfully delighting in the gratification of his passions, doth not cause this wheel thus already set in motion to continue revolving, liveth in vain, O son of Pritha."

Wide distinction is to be made therefore between the psychic pleasures of the personality and the true pleasure and disposition of the Soul. The former is a product of Lower Manas, and is artificial, temporary, skin-deep, of the nature of amusement and emotional gratification. Higher Manasic pleasure, on the other hand, is enduring and noble above all other experiences. In its highest sense, true happiness is closely related to bliss, which has been defined by all religious mystics as blessedness, felicity, rapture. The great tragedy of modern civilization is the fact that men search for true happiness in the turbulent waves of Lower Mind, in the desires and ambitions of the personality. We ceaselessly deceive ourselves with the delusion that heart aspiration and yearning can be satisfied through the acquirement of *things,* or on the plane of emotion or sensation. With each new acquirement or experience, we think that now, at last, the object of our heart's desire has been fulfilled, only to wake up, sooner or later, to the fact that all objects of sense must eventually turn to dust and ashes in the mouth. Yet, on and on the Law of Karma leads us, moved by the force of our own souls, which will never allow us to rest content with less than divinity for the whole man, and for all.

True happiness can be known only when the individual adjusts his own attitude of mind, so that instead of *taking* all he can get from life, he asks what it is he can *give;* instead of viewing the Law as punitive and restrictive, he sees it as a power that works for his good; instead of thinking that Karma is to be feared, he sees it as something to be trusted and revered. What would we think of a world in which no man could receive help from another, in which each was required to labor just for himself? How would we like the idea of a universe without Law and order? Those who recount their blessings soon come to see that the Law of the Universe is their truest friend, a reality that we can and do trust, to some degree, every moment of our lives. Universal adjustment and lasting joy will be achieved only when *men, in their turn,* become as trustworthy as the Law, equally concerned for the good of all as for their own advance.

The Science of Occultism

Occultism is not merely an isolated discovery showing humanity to be possessed of certain powers over Nature, which the narrower study of Nature from the merely materialistic standpoint has failed to develop; it is an illumination cast over all previous spiritual speculation worth anything, of a kind which knits together some apparently divergent systems. It is to spiritual philosophy much what Sanscrit was found to be to comparative philology; it is a common stock of philosophical roots. Occultism, as it is no new invention, is no specific sect, but the professors of no sect can afford to dispense with the sidelights it throws upon the conception of Nature and Man's destinies which they may have been induced by their own specific faith to form; occultism, in fact, must be recognized by any one who will take the trouble to put before his mind clearly the problems with which it deals, as a study of the most sublime importance to every man who cares to live a life worthy of his human rank. . . .

Adepts of occultism of the present day inherit from their great predecessors a science which deals not merely with physics, but with the constitution and capacities of the human soul and spirit.

—A. P. Sinnett

THOUGHTS ON THE "STORM"

MANY theosophists these days must be asking themselves what their attitude should be toward those people who view with apprehension and dire foreboding the terrible events now taking place on this planet. That a storm is raging, the most momentous one in recorded history, there can be no doubt, and that its fury is tearing into the thoughts and lives of countless people is equally true, as the alarming increase in nervous and mental ailments reveals.

In *"Light on the Path,"* we are told in one of the precepts to "look for the flower to bloom in the silence that follows the storm," and while the storm in that little book denotes the period of conflict in the individual soul preceding the birth of spiritual consciousness, it is analogous to the storm now raging in the world.

What then, we may ask ourselves, should be our attitude in this period of Kali Yuga toward those who live in sensation? We cannot ignore their plight. We know that our Elder Brothers, both incarnate and excarnate, are laboring indefatigably for the common good; but there are thousands who have not this comfort, who indeed have no hope, and for whom the outlook is fraught with gloom. Obviously, it would be useless to offer them the balm of theosophical thought, since few are ready to receive its tenets; but we can in our daily contacts strive to be to them what our Elder Brothers are to us.

Let us then be practising theosophists by giving aid and comfort without stint when occasion arises; let us do it willingly and cheerfully, and above all, let us never abandon that shining serenity and sense of equilibrium born of faith in the ultimate triumph of good, even when the storm reaches its crescendo. For then, and then only, will we become to others as "elder brothers"; and, who knows, we may by our positive actions plant the seeds of theosophical thought in the minds of many, the flowers of which will bloom in the deep silence that follows the storm. After all, we are not a smug little group sitting in a hermetically sealed chamber studying the cosmogony. On the contrary, while being able to retreat within, we are not afraid to advance boldly without to do what we can to alleviate human and mental suffering; for we know that unless we give cheerfully of our bounty and strength to those bewildered people, our study of theosophy will avail us nothing, and in the next incarnation we shall be as those born without power.

RESTITUTION of BORROWED ROBES

Hippocrates and William Gilbert

THERE are persons," wrote H. P. Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled* (1887), "whose minds would be incapable of appreciating the intellectual grandeur of the ancients, even in physical science, were they to receive the most complete demonstration of their profound learning and achievements." Her words are still true today; but truth keeps breaking out in diverse places. Two instances of some modern restitution of borrowed robes are worth recording.

A classical scholar and a London physician, both being (appropriately enough) in Alexandria during World War II, planned and started a book which has now been published in London. They have translated into English and edited *The Medical Works of Hippocrates* (by John Chadwick and W. N. Mann, Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1951). It can be said that the modern student of medicine is now provided with an accurate rendering of the masterpieces of the ancient Greek school at Cos. Of Hippocrates (d. BC 361), we are told in *The Theosophical Glossary* (1892):

> Having studied his art from the votive tablets offered by the cured patients at the temples of Æsculapius, he became an Initiate and the most proficient healer of his day, so much so that he was almost deified. His learning and knowledge were enormous.

The editors make it clear, in this fine piece of work, that the accounts of the signs and symptoms of disease given by Hippocrates cannot be bettered even at the present time. H. P. Blavatsky reminds us that Galen, Greek physician and philosopher (c. AD 130-200), said of the writings of his great predecessor that "they are truly the voice of an oracle." We may understand something of the knowledge of this Initiate of ancient Greece when we read his advice on observing a patient, as given in this new translation:

> The signs to watch for in acute diseases are as follows. First study the patient's *facies;* whether it has a healthy look and in particular whether it be exactly as it normally is. If the patient's normal appearance is preserved, this is best, just as the more abnormal it is, the worse it is. The latter appearance may be described thus: the nose sharp, the eyes sunken, the temples fallen in, the ears cold and the colour of the face pale and dusky.

So accurate a description is this (one reviewer has pointed out) of a patient suffering from the severe toxemia of a generalized peritonitis, that it is always quoted in teaching present-day students.

Medical students know Hippocrates as the author of the famous oath, and they learn little else about him. In this new work they have the opportunity of acquainting themselves with an essay on tradition in medicine, followed by Books I and III of the Epidemics, with individual case histories, and public health reports, beginning with an account of the weather at the time. The famous aphorisms are here (one of the best known is "Life is short and Art is long; the occasion fleeting, experience deceitful, and judgment difficult"). The final section of this translation, called "Coan Prognosis," gives in English for the first time a large number of other aphorisms from the Hippocratic school of medicine at Cos. There is an essay on dreams, together with a famous account of epilepsy under the title of "the sacred disease."

With medicine burdened as it is with scientific technicalities, it is with relief that we find Hippocrates reminding us that medicine is essentially an art, an art of which Hippocrates himself was one of the greatest of its ancient masters. It was Plato who pointed an argument (in the *Phaedo*) by appealing to the scientific method of Hippocrates where he insisted, as one of the first principles of medicine, upon the study of the human body and its functions. But this study had wider applications than are admitted by the orthodox science of today. As H. P. Blavatsky remarked, Hippocrates (like Pliny the Elder and Younger) would never "have derided the archaic teachings with respect to the evolution of the human races and animal species, as the present day Scientist—geologist or anthropologist—is sure to do" (*S.D.* II, 688). Evidence of his arcane knowledge is to be found in his statement that the number seven "by its occult virtues tended to the accomplishment of all things, to be the dispenser of life and fountain of all its changes" (*S.D.* II, 312). And Hippocrates's link with the mystery schools may be seen in an intuitive study of this latest translation of his medical works. Theosophical students will welcome the further assistance thus afforded in detecting "the vital principles which underlie the philosophical systems of old." They will not forget that Hippocrates answered even the modern sophists many centuries ago:

> All knowledge, all arts are to be found in nature; if we question her *properly* she will reveal to us the truths to pertain to each of these and to ourselves. What is nature in operation but the very divinity itself manifesting its presence? How are we to interrogate her; and how is she to answer us? We must proceed with *faith,* with the firm assurance of discovering at last the whole of the truth; and nature will let us know her answer, through our *inner* sense, which with the help of our knowledge of a certain *art* or *science,* reveals to us the truth so clearly that further doubt becomes impossible. (Quoted in *Isis,* I, 424-5.)

In a reference to the judgment of the Lodge of Adepts that "the world's prejudices have to be conquered step by step," an Eastern Teacher cited the case of William Gilbert, of Colchester, Queen Elizabeth's physician, who, in 1600, published his famous work, *De Magnete* (see p. 395, this issue). Although Gilbert was the first to use the terms *electricity, electric force,* and *electric attraction,* it was long before anything like proper recognition was given to his importance in the history of science. His *De Magnete* was the first great work of physics published in England; but we had to wait until 1893 for an English translation. It certainly fulfilled for its author the poet Dryden's prophecy: "Gilbert shall live till loadstones cease to draw." In this work, his general conclusion is that the phenomena of magnetism are explained by regarding the earth as one vast spherical magnet.

In 1891, an eminent English physicist (who was also a prominent member of the Society of Friends), Dr. Silvanus P. Thompson, D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S., published his *Gilbert of Colchester: An Elizabethan Magnetizer,* and he was also instrumental in founding at Cambridge in 1889 a Gilbert Club to celebrate the tercentenary of Gilbert's work and to publish translations of *De Magnete* and similar works.

Now, a historian whose Elizabethan studies have brought him into prominence in England, has made some public amends for the general obscurity into which Gilbert's name has been allowed to fall, except within the circle of specialists, and among the number of those true occultists who have always known of his greatness. We quote from Mr. A. L. Rowse's *The England of Elizabeth* (Macmillan, 1950):

> East Anglia produced a great scientist in William Gilbert of Colchester. We certainly have not yet exhausted the significance of his book *De Magnete,* published in 1600: the foundation of the study of electro-magnetism, its subject the properties of the magnet,

> of magnetic bodies, and of "that great magnet, the earth." In it Gilbert propounds a whole theory of physics in terms of magnetism, the *Physiologia nova* he calls it (Cf. Silvanus P. Thompson *Notes on the "De Magnete" of Dr. William Gilbert*). What is fascinating is that his position with regard to the magnetic properties of all large rotating bodies seems to be at this moment becoming the starting-point for a new line of development in physics. Gilbert was a great man whose work was known to, and approved by Galileo. It was unfortunately depreciated by Bacon, who proclaimed the scientific method of experiment and induction, of which Gilbert's work is the greatest example in the Age, but which Bacon did little to explore (p. 28).

In 1949, Mr. H. Butterfield (Professor of Modern History, Cambridge University) published *The Origins of Modern Science,* 1300-1800, and here also we find a tribute paid to Gilbert:

> This work *(De Magnete)* marks, in fact, a new and important stage in the history of the whole problem (gravitation). I have already mentioned how, according to Aristotle, four elements underlay all the forms of sublunary matter, and one of these was called "earth"—not the soil which we can take into our hands, but a more refined and sublimated substance free from the mixtures and impurities that characterise the common earth. William Gilbert, starting from this view, held that the matter on or near the surface of the globe was waste and sediment—a purely external wrapping like the skin and hair of an animal—especially as by exposure to the atmosphere and to the influence of the heavenly bodies it was peculiarly subject to debasement and to the operation of chance and change. The authentic "earth"—Aristotle's element in its pure state—was to be found below this superficial level, and formed, in fact, the bulk of the interior of this globe. Indeed, it was neither more nor less than lodestone. This world of ours was for the most part simply a colossal magnet.

In this case, as in so many others, H. P. Blavatsky was not only a pioneer in public recognition of Gilbert's genius: she realized the deeper implications of Gilbert's discoveries in relation to individual psychology. As long ago as 1877, she had called attention to the importance of the principle enunciated by Gilbert "that the globe is one vast magnet," and she pointed out that, even at that date, advanced electricians were "beginning to realize that man, too, possesses this property, and that the mutual attractions and repulsions of individuals toward each other may at least in part find their explanation in this fact" (*Isis* I, 497).

YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK—

WHAT *may be the difference between the terms "moral" and "spiritual"? They are often used concomitantly, as though referring to two distinguishable aspects of man's nature.*

Definitions of such freely-used words are usually rather evasive. As a rule, they connote a whole group of virtuous but somewhat misty qualities. We might suggest that the term *moral* may be best applied to areas of individual human choice, to the way a man acts in relation to his own inner convictions, and in company with his fellow men. A man's motive is the stamp of his moral character, for in determining that, he is absolutely alone and independent of external factors of conditioning.

The word *spiritual,* if related to the theosophical meaning of Spirit, would seem to refer to the universal aspect of all mankind. A sage, a great teacher of mankind, a "saint," in the non-Christian sense, suggests the qualities which pertain to spirit, while the man whom we respect as having integrity and honesty, for example, we would term a moral man.

Referring to the principles of the man, we could perhaps say that morality represents on *this* plane the two principles of Manas and Buddhi, and spirit, the unmodified Atma, common to all life and beings. Of course, as a man begins to act in a more moral manner, bringing into activity higher Manas and Buddhi, he inevitably approaches more closely that state of enlightenment wherein all beings are perceived as part of himself. Thus we may say that spiritual action is an extension of moral integrity to the point where the whole of life is inescapably included in the man's every thought, and he truly "acts for and as the Self of *all* creatures." We may assume, especially in the West where the idea of Universal Brotherhood is not as deeply ingrained as it is in portions of the East, that men progress by first learning to honor the highest they can perceive in themselves—"to thine own self be true"—coming eventually in the course of such a pursuit to see that that "highest" is nothing separate in one man from all his fellows, but is linked inexorably to the whole of life.

We often talk about looking for reasons and motives behind another's act in order to better understand him. But, once found, these reasons or motives do not give us any right to judge him. What, really, is our discrimination for, then?

Why not for judging *our own* motives and reasons? When we go looking for possible reasons and motives behind another's act, it should not necessarily be to better understand him, but simply to show ourselves that we *cannot* completely understand him, and therefore have neither the ability nor the right to judge him. We postulate other motives—better ones, we hope—than appear on the surface of many another person's act, because the principles of simple justice so demand, and also because, if we are to keep our discrimination, we must strive to elevate our impulses, and one of the least elevating impulses we all possess is to look for the worst construction to put upon what someone else does.

If the lower desires and passions occupy so large a part of man's thinking as they seem to—in proportion to the number of aspirations and ideal thoughts—why is it that the Ego does not spend more time in Kamaloka than in Devachan?

Some men do spend more time in Kamaloka than in Devachan, it is taught, but such are by no means the majority of human beings. We can only assume that it is not simply the amount of thinking on material levels that a man does which determines his stay in Kamaloka, but the intensity of the thoughts he entertains. We should remember that after the death of the body, in the "effect states" of Kamaloka and Devachan, the man's work is to exhaust the energies set up in life by his thoughts, desires and impulses. It is, perhaps, only the strong and confirmed sensualist whose "kamalokic thoughts" can maintain sufficient energy to ensnare the Ego after death. For the average man, losing that focus for Tanhaic energy with the death of the physical body, thereby cuts off the "feeding" of the kamic elements, which then become rootless and quickly wither. Aspirations, on the other hand, are rooted in the immortal nature of man, and are strengthened, rather than weakened, by the loss of the physical instrument.

We can use the analogy of a diver, weighting himself with leaden shoes and heavy equipment in order to be able to overcome his

natural buoyancy so that he can stay under the water. Were he to throw off his weighted clothing, he would rise effortlessly to the surface. Similarly, we may think, with the man at death, loosing his lifetime's hold on the physical body. Immediately his inner "polarity" is changed, and the natural upward-moving tendency of the soul asserts itself. Only if the kamic lines are extraordinarily strong and heavy can he be stayed from his ascent, or if some strong chord of concern for those he leaves behind him binds him by electrical and magnetic threads back to earth. Kamaloka is much like a "decompression chamber," preceding the ego's return to its natural atmosphere.

Why, too, do we spend so much more time in sleeping than we do in dreaming? It is because the ego, as well as the body, demands its needed rest. So, the teaching is, the ego needs its rest and peace between incarnations, and this is afforded in Devachan.

Once the body has died, the magic mirror has been shattered which so fascinated the ego during life. No longer is there any cognizance of the joys of physical existence. The instrument through which they were enjoyed no longer exists, and consequently what energy his lower thoughts had is quickly exhausted. Mr. Judge writes in the *Ocean,* "Struggling out of the body the entire man goes into *kamaloka,* to purgatory, where he again struggles and loosens himself from the lower *skandhas;* this period of birth over, the higher principles, *Atma-Buddhi-Manas,* begin to think in a manner different from that which the body and brain permitted in life. . . ."

Does not this give us the picture of death as a change in polarity? The man struggles to get out of the body. This struggle may be of different kinds, but always it represents a gradual or sudden change in the inner balance of the man, when he begins to withdraw from external pursuits. "The hunger for the Eternal" is on him, and all to do with the body and possessions and *things* is a hindrance and a nuisance. Now the Ego is seeking "its own place," and it struggles mightily to overcome all that keeps it from that realm. This would explain, incidentally, why those who die sudden and violent deaths are not really dead, though their physical bodies have been killed. Until the inner switch of equilibrium takes place within the man's mind, the normal processes of real death cannot supervene.

"A STRANGE STORY"

H. P. BLAVATSKY has written of Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, the author of *Zanoni, A Strange Story, The Coming Race,* and *The House and the Brain,* as "one whose memory will ever be dear and sacred to the heart of every true theosophist . . . one who ranked higher than any other in the small number of genuine mystical writers, for he knew what he was talking about, which is more than can be said of other writers in this department of literature." Lytton died in 1873, just two years prior to the establishment of the Theosophical Society, and his work, though primarily in the field of fiction, undoubtedly entitles him to be considered a forerunner of the present Theosophical endeavor.

If one can gauge his popularity from the fact that the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1890 edition) devoted five closely printed columns to his biography, his writings must have had a widespread effect on the race mind. Mr. Judge implies that such works as *Zanoni* paved the way for the presentation to the West of the sevenfold nature of man. "It was necessary to direct their [Western] minds to the fact that there is more of man than mere body, and therefore such books as *Esoteric Buddhism, Zanoni* and others came before them." Present-day students of Theosophy, owing to the wealth of material afforded them in the direct Theosophical writings, probably do not find it essential to read Bulwer-Lytton's novels. His works were avidly read by the early Theosophists, however, and this interest called forth many amplifying statements from the Theosophical teachers on certain doctrines he touched upon.

Zanoni, which undoubtedly is the most occult of the author's novels, dwells chiefly upon the trials of discipleship, and the existence of Adepts. A Master once wrote to A. P. Sinnett, regarding the book:

> I hope that at least *you* will understand that we (or most of us) are far from being the heartless morally dried-up mummies some would fancy us to be. Mejnour [the adept depicted in *Zanoni*] is very well where he is—as an ideal character of a thrilling, in many respects truthful story. Yet, believe me, few of us would care to play the part in life of a desiccated pansy between the leaves of a volume of solemn poetry . . . none of *our* degree are like the stern hero of Bulwer's romance.

Isis Unveiled (I, 285-6) quotes from this book an intensely interesting description of the invisible elemental world. Commenting thereon, H.P.B. states:

> Such is the insufficient sketch of elemental beings void of divine spirit, given by one whom many with reason believed to know more than he was prepared to admit in the face of an incredulous public. . . . No author in the world of literature ever gave a more truthful or more poetical description of these beings. . . . Now himself "a thing not of matter" but an "Idea of joy and light," his words sound more like the faithful echo of memory than the exuberant outflow of mere imagination.

In *The Coming Race,* or *The New Utopia,* Bulwer-Lytton predicted, among other things, the invention of the airplane, and truly foretold, according to the author of *The Secret Doctrine,* the constructive use by the coming races of *vril,* the ancient Mash-Mak of the Atlanteans, a sidereal force so powerful, the ancient writings say, it can reduce to ashes 100,000 men and elephants as easily as a small object.

So much for the general background of Lord Lytton's mystic tales. We are presently concerned with a striking passage from the book *The Strange Story,* which seems worth while extracting for the special attention of THEOSOPHY readers. To understand the setting of this extract, it needs be said that Dr. Fenwick, the teller of the tale, has been deeply disturbed by the strange behaviour and history of an acquaintance named Margrave. The doctor has been inclined to doubt the existence of Soul as an independent entity, having come under the influence of the then growing school of scientific materialism. Through the agency of some magical potion he gains a remarkable vision into the brain and inner consciousness of Margrave as it existed three years previously, at the time of a great moral crisis in the man's life. Of this passage, H.P.B. says: "We do not know where in literature can be found a more vivid and beautiful description of this difference between the life-principle of man and that of animals. . . ." Although it treats of what appears to some to be an unpleasant subject—the possibility of a man losing his soul—every human being could learn much from the vision, understand better the daily war between the divine and animal natures within his own consciousness and that nothing valuable in civilization or in man survives once the soul-light vanishes. In the article, "Occultism vs. the Occult Arts," H.P.B. warns those dabblers in magic who "take for their ideal Mar-

grave with his ever-renewing youth, and care little for the soul as the price paid for it." Such practices may lead to a temporary rejuvenation of the lower man, but end, it is said, in *personal* annihilation. In reading the following excerpt, one must remember that the "mind" referred to by Bulwer-Lytton is apparently the lower brain intellect, in contradistinction to the higher immortal mind, which is an indivisible part of the Soul; also, that the "silvery spark" Dr. Fenwick did not perceive in the lower orders of nature, is not absent therefrom, but simply dormant at their stage of evolution. Follows the record of the doctor's vision:

". . . the brain now opened on my sight, with all its labyrinth of cells. I seemed to have the clue to every winding in the maze. I saw therein a moral world, charred and ruined, as, in some fable I have read, the world of the moon is described to be; yet withal it was a brain of magnificent formation. The powers abused to evil had been originally of rare order; imagination, and scope; the energies that dare; the faculties that discover. But the moral part of the brain had failed to dominate the mental. Defective veneration of what is good or great; cynical disdain of what is right and just; in fine, a great intellect first misguided, then perverted, and now falling with the decay of the body into ghastly but imposing ruins. Such was the world of that brain as it had been three years ago. And still continuing to gaze thereon, I observed three separate emanations of light; the one of a pale red hue, the second of a pale azure, the third a silvery spark.

"The red light, which grew paler and paler as I looked, undulated from the brain along the arteries, the veins, the nerves. And I murmured to myself, 'Is this the principle of animal life?'

"The azure light equally permeated the frame, crossing and uniting with the red, but in a separate and distinct ray, exactly as, in the outer world, a ray of light crosses or unites with a ray of heat, though in itself a separate individual agency. And again I murmured to myself, 'Is this the principle of intellectual being, directing or influencing that of animal life; with it, yet not of it?'

"But the silvery spark! What was that? Its centre seemed the brain. But I could fix it to no single organ. Nay, wherever I looked through the system, it reflected itself as a star reflects itself upon water. And I observed that while the red light was growing feebler

and feebler, and the azure light was confused, irregular—now obstructed, now hurrying, now almost lost—the silvery spark was unaltered, undisturbed. So independent of all which agitated and vexed the frame, that I became strangely aware that if the heart stopped in its action, and the red light died out, if the brain were paralyzed, that energetic mind smitten into idiocy, and the azure light wandering objectless as a meteor wanders over the morass,—still that silver spark would shine the same, indestructible by aught that shattered its tabernacle. And I murmured to myself, 'Can that starry spark speak the presence of the soul? Does the silver light shine within creatures to which no life immortal has been promised by Divine Revelation?'

"Involuntarily I turned my sight towards the dead forms in the motley collection [of the museum where this scene takes place], and lo, in my trance or my vision, life returned to them all! To the elephant and the serpent; to the tiger, the vulture, the beetle, the moth; to the fish and the polypus, and to yon mockery of man in the giant ape.

"I seemed to see each as it lived in its native realm of earth, or of air, or of water; and the red light played more or less warm, through the structure of each, and the azure light, through duller of hue, seemed to shoot through the red, and communicate to the creatures an intelligence far inferior indeed to that of man, but sufficing to conduct the current of their will, and influence the cunning of their instincts. But in none . . . was visible the starry silver spark. . . .

"Again I gazed on the starry spark in the form of the man. And I murmured to myself, 'But if this be the soul, why is it so undisturbed and undarkened by the sins which have left such trace and such ravage in the world of the brain?' And gazing yet more intently on the spark, I became vaguely aware that it was not the soul, but the halo around the soul, as the star we see in heaven is not the star itself, but its circle of rays. And if the light itself was undisturbed and undarkened, it was because no sins done in the body could annihilate its essence, nor affect the eternity of its duration. The light was clear within the ruins of its lodgment, because it might pass away, but could not be extinguished.

"But the soul itself in the heart of the light reflected back on my own soul within me its ineffable trouble, humiliation, and sorrow; for those ghastly wrecks of power placed at its sovereign command

it was responsible: and, appalled by its own sublime fate of duration,* was about to carry into eternity the account of its mission in time. Yet it seemed that while the soul was still there, though so forlorn and so guilty, even the wrecks around it were majestic. And the soul, whatever sentence it might merit, was not among the hopelessly lost. For in its remorse and its shame, it might still have retained what could serve for redemption. And I saw that the mind was storming the soul, in some terrible rebellious war—all of thought, of passion, of desire, through which the azure light poured its restless flow, were surging up round the starry spark, as in siege. And I could not comprehend the war, nor guess what it was that the mind demanded the soul to yield. Only the distinction between the two was made intelligible by their antagonism. And I saw that the soul, sorely tempted, looked afar for escape from the subjects it had ever so ill-controlled, and who sought to reduce to their vassal the power which had lost authority as their king. . . . And suddenly the starry spark rose from the ruins and the tumult around it,—rose into space and vanished. And where my soul had recognized the presence of soul, there was a void. But the red light burned still, becoming more and move vivid; and as it thus repaired and recruited its lustre, the whole animal form which had been so decrepit, grew restored from decay, grew into vigour and youth: and I saw Margrave as I had seen him in the waking world, the radiant image of animal life in the beauty of its fairest bloom.

"And over this rich vitality and this symmetric mechanism now reigned only, with the animal life, the mind. The starry light fled and the soul vanished, still was left visible the mind: mind, by which sensations convey and cumulate ideas, and muscles obey volition: mind, as in those animals that have more than the elementary instincts: mind, as it might be in men, were men not immortal. As my eyes, in the Vision, followed the azure light, undulating as before, through the cells of the brain, and crossing the red amidst the labyrinth of the nerves, I perceived that the essence of that azure

*This distress would not appear to be of the nature of that experienced by the personal man. The Reincarnating Ego on its own plane is said to be beyond such human emotions as shame, remorse, fear, or the desire to escape from responsibilities. The soul's only sorrow is its inability to express its divine nature through the personal man, when that man refuses to be influenced by its own Lord. As H.P.B. emphasizes, in commenting on the above vision, ". . . the immortal soul, 'the silvery spark,' observed by Dr. Fenwick in Margrave's brain, and not found by him in the animals, *never changes,* but remains indestructible 'by aught that shatters its tabernacle'."

light had undergone a change: it had lost that faculty of continuous and concentrated power by which man improves on the works of the past, and weaves schemes to be developed in the future of remote generations; it had lost all sympathy in the past, because it had lost all conception of a future beyond the grave; it had lost conscience, it had lost remorse; the being it informed was no longer accountable through eternity for the employment of time. The azure light was even more vivid in certain organs useful to the conservation of existence, as in those organs I had observed it more vivid among some of the inferior animals than it is in man—secretiveness, destructiveness, and the ready perception of things immediate to the wants of the day. . . . it was lead-like, or dim, in the great social organs through which man subordinates his own interest to that of his species, and utterly lost in those through which man is reminded of his duties to the throne of his Maker.

"In that marvellous penetration with which the Vision endowed me, I perceived that in this mind, though in energy far superior to many . . . still . . . I felt that the mind wanted *the something,* without which men never could found cities, frame laws, bind together, beautify, exalt the elements of this world. . . . The ant, and the bee, and the beaver congregate and construct; but they do not improve. Man improves because the future impels onward that which is not found in the ant, the bee, and the beaver—that which was gone from the being before me.

"I shrank appalled into myself, covered my face with my hands, and groaned aloud: 'Have I ever then doubted that soul is distinct from mind?' "

A Strange Story contains many another clue to the workings of mind and brain. Bulwer-Lytton speaks of the return of impressions to the eye, and how physical effects can be caused simply by mental or dream images seen internally. His story illustrates and discusses the terrible power of social gossip and slander, which is a perverted expression of Imagination, the faculty he names "the most glorious" of the human mind. "Natural-born magicians" is evidently a phrase coined by Lytton, who suggests the reality of Magic. Thus, *A Strange Story* is fiction philosophized, an example of what H.P.B. called for from theosophists in "A Tidal Wave": "novels with a moral sense in them deep enough to stir Society."

THE "GITA"—INFORMAL ESSAYS

On Everyday Questions

"Truly, then, one should study Occult philosophy before one begins to verify and seek the mysteries of nature on its surface alone. . . ." —*The Secret Doctrine,* I, 536

ALTHOUGH the *Gita's* fifteenth chapter involves a direct discussion of the Ashwattha tree only in its opening passages, it is important to note that the treatment of "Devotion Through Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit" begins in this fashion. For the Supreme Spirit, as Krishna lets it be known to Arjuna elsewhere, can only be discovered *through* its manifestations, and the Tree is the most universally known symbol for the totality of Living Nature.

Krishna's central theme throughout the *Gita,* as we have discovered, includes the truth that manifestation, and "individual existence," while productive of illusion, are nonetheless necessary. Yet the work of life and the final attainment of Seership involves the separation of the fruits of life, which we strive to possess, from the roots of life, which we *always* possess, even though knowing it not.

The "fruits" are bountiful or poor according to the season and the climate; in other words, they are directly modified by eternal forces; the leaves are not eternal—even evergreens shed their needles. Yet the tree itself endures, despite these inconsistencies. For man, the Tree is his Individuality, connecting a vision of spiritual unity above with egotistic materiality below. Can one prune the foliage so that the life sap can grow another, stronger, and more complete tree? H. P. Blavatsky, in discussing a Brahmanic allegory concerning the Ashwattha tree, provides the intimation that this is precisely what may happen in the course of individual human evolution, for she writes that Buddhi, the seventh sense, "is transformed into *the* tree—that tree whose fruit is emancipation—which finally destroys the very roots of the Aswatta tree, the symbol of *life* and of its illusive joys and pleasures."

How many students of Theosophy have attempted to draw diagrams of the Ashwattha tree? Not an easy metaphysical representation to materialize, since it can be drawn in innumerable ways, and still none will fit all the descriptions in the ancient texts. One of the oldest and greatest of symbolic forms, this "inverted" tree will continue to evoke challenging and inspiring thought, for we can find

analogues to the tree in all departments of human inquiry—science, history, psychology and religion. The offshoots of cultures and races reproduce the process of synthesis (fruit) and discard (fallen leaves), which is also the story of religion and philosophy. Of all symbols, moreover, the tree is perhaps the most natural representation of Life in its organic wholeness. It is represented in many cultures as that particular tree with which the region felt an especial affinity—it might be the fir, the sycamore, the pippala, or the Bo-Tree, under which Buddha received his final enlightenment and liberation. The Ashwatta, too, is connected through legend and allegory with the serpents who twine around a tree trunk, and with the Caduceus:

> In the beginning of their joint existence as a glyph of Immortal Being, the tree and Serpent were divine imagery, truly. The tree was *reversed,* and its roots were generated in Heaven and grew out of the Rootless Root of all-being. Its trunk grew and developed, crossing the planes of Pleroma, it shot out crossways its luxuriant branches, first on the plane of hardly differentiated matter, and then downward till they touched the terrestrial plane. Thus, the Asvattha, tree of Life and Being, whose destruction alone leads to immortality, is said in the Bhagavatgita to grow with its roots above and its branches below. The roots represent the Supreme Being, or First Cause, the LOGOS; but one has to go beyond those roots to *unite oneself with Krishna.* . . . The Vedas are its leaves. He only who goes *beyond* the roots shall never return, *i.e.,* shall reincarnate no more during this "age" of Brahma.

The image of the Ashwattha tree given us by the *Gita* is certainly puzzling. Yet the Ashwattha symbol could hardly be universal in its suggestiveness were it not marvelously complex and difficult. Easy to understand, of course, is the growing of the tree "from above." This clearly refers to the inauguration of each period of evolution on the spiritual plane, the psychological parallel of which is the initiation of all material effects by the "Higher" Self. And, as indicated, the evanescence of leaves, blossoms and fruit is a evident analogy for the transitory, purely personal pleasures.

One stops here to note how aptly the leaves also symbolize the "Vedas" in the world of Doctrine. They, too, "come and go and are brief and changeable" against the background of eternity. Yet the *tree,* its roots and stable trunk, can also be the tree of all knowledge about manifested things. Proceeding from *this* plane we first contact the branches, closest to us as we stand with our own feet on earth.

Like the giraffe with its food-tree, man nibbles on the leaves of the "Vedas," finally stretching his neck for further food of learning. But the eating of the Vedas is never fully satisfactory, and the being who feeds thus is never self-sufficient, but must be ceaselessly seeking provisions. Therefore, the whole of the theosophic philosophy indicates the possibility of reaching a stage where one is physically, psychically, mentally and morally able to exist without the ceaseless foraging we experience as "learning by chance"—or grace. The true stature of Mahatmaship is said to be attained only when neither ordinary doctrines nor the most common foods are needed.

The image tends to elude us, though, when we try to envision, not only the roots which come from the "regions above," but also "those roots which ramify *below* in the regions of mankind." The tree appears to have both branches and roots, mingled, at the earth-level of material existence. What are these secondary roots? If they grow from the branches, they fasten the tree down securely, so securely that it can no longer respond with graceful motion to gentle breezes which might be favorable for evolutionary adaptation. These *terrestrial* roots probably represent the lowest and grossest of our material appetites, which, at death, become the kamarupa. This even the personality leaves behind in order to know the relative freedom of Devachan. These lowest, "Tamasic" roots may be thought of as the possessive fetishes of man—his strange passions for jewels of fabulous price, for the retention of kingships or popular esteem, for the possessive imprisonment of wife, husband or child. These are "roots" indeed, hard to dislodge, which take from the human tree of life its native elasticity of temper. Such rigidity endangers the whole tree, from bottom to top, since, in cases of storm, insufficient pliancy is left for the trunk.

Then we come to what may be the greatest puzzle of the Ashwattha image. Why does one have to "hew down with the strong axe of dispassion this tree"? Let us look again at the mental image we have tried to create. The poor tree is fastened *both* ways, rigid, incapable of turning toward more light or away from prevailing winds. This, perhaps, is the Man himself, crucified by full incarnation—Prometheus, bound. He has to learn to cut the fastenings, in order that some indigenous motion may be resumed. Thus Buddha spoke of "prison houses of sense."

The "breaking of bonds," the cutting of entangling alliances, is thus an inevitable part of Occult symbolism. We often mistake this for a recommendation that all ties be severed which connect us with the pulsating life around us, but it is actually only the trunk—or, in this case, *egotism*—which needs to be severed. The trunk is what gives to all our experiences in life their static quality, defying progressive transition. The Personal Ego forever seeks to preserve the status quo—a foolish effort, for resistance to change or new challenge leaves us susceptible to incessant suffering from those disappointments ordained for one who does not seek pliancy.

The branches of this Ashwattha tree, by the way, are not "evil things," but only, as the *Gita* says, what must be expected to grow, naturally, from the three qualities. These branches, at least, are pliable. They will sustain and regenerate leaves; also they have connection, however remote, with roots in the highest spheres of man's spiritual individuality. The "new" tree, which the Brahmanical allegory spoke of as replacing the "Ashwattha" of our present selves, must be imagined to retain pliancy. The new tree, it is said, allows Adepts and Sages to live in the world while yet not of it—not imprisoned by rigidities of mind, ambition, or appetite.

Each student has the opportunity of weaving these complexes of imagery whenever the Ashwattha symbol is concerned. Three simple things may perhaps be pointed out in connection with it, however, on which all will agree. First, the most obvious implication of the Ashwattha is that the entire world is presently "upside down" from the standpoint of spiritual perception and evaluation. Secondly, our work is to study the inter-relationship of the various integral parts of the tree—never to take a leaf for a branch, or a branch for the roots, as is the case when we adopt a fixed "religious" idea. Thirdly, for one whose interest directs him toward an evaluation of the many commentaries on the *Gita* extant, it will become clear that H. P. Blavatsky's explanations in the *Secret Doctrine* are more complete than those offered by the most learned of Hindu scholars and pundits. One may even infer that H.P.B.'s delineations and correlations have often been conveniently appropriated by later commentators. Thus we may see more evidence that the body of teachings Madame Blavatsky represented as the *Secret Doctrine* is indeed the "tree of wisdom" of all ages.

CONCENTRATION

"There is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous."

CONCENTRATION of the mind means the permanent predominance of one set of ideas or thoughts over the rest. Our mind is so constituted that it has a natural tendency to be lost in the labyrinth of the senses. Guided by unlimited desires, the mind hovers over a thousand and one subjects of sense, and the attention being thus divided, the mental energy so spent is not productive of far-reaching results. Biographies of great men show that the real difference between them and the common herd lies in the power of concentration of thought. Scientists, philosophers and wise men, acquire such a wonderful control over the mind that they can, at will, immerse themselves in their special subjects, with all-absorbing attention. To discover great and grand truths, we must set the whole mental energy in one direction only. If we want to act up to any grand and sublime ideal, the ideal should be made to stand out in bold relief before the mind's eye.

It is a curious fact that a mental impression, if sufficiently strong and lasting, is capable of reacting on the system, and this reaction has been found to mould even the physical frame in a peculiar way. The process known as *Bhramarikaran,* in our Shastras, is an instance exemplifying the truth of the assertion, and modern gynecologists have in a manner corroborated the observation of our ancient and revered *Rishes* by describing the effect of terror or any lasting mental impression, on the human organisation. The effect of fright, caused by the sight of a *Kanchpoka* (beetle) on the delicate organisation of a *Telapoka* (cock-roach) is so great that in the course of time (two or three weeks) the insect known as the cock-roach is transformed into a beetle. This fact has come under my personal observation. In gynecological works, various instances are recorded of the effect of fright on pregnant women, this effect being transmitted to the unborn offspring whose features were moulded accordingly. If, then, a mental impression is so powerful and its effects so very far-reaching, there can be no doubt that, by proper culture and training, we can bring the mind to such a state that only one set of impressions will be per-

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manently predominant in it, and the results of such impressions will be proportionate to their intensity.

The practice of concentration of thought, if carried out steadily for some time, is seen to produce (1) psychic exaltation, (2) perceptive exaltation, and (3) moral exaltation. But the mere exaltation of the psychic, perceptive and moral faculties, is not of itself an indication of the success of such practice. For in the incubation period of insanity, these faculties are first exalted and then perverted. There is no hard and fast line of demarcation between sanity and insanity. We cannot, with any degree of certainty, define the limit where sanity ends and insanity begins. Dr. Johnson has traced, with the hand of a master, the insidious advances of diseased thought. He says:—

> Some particular train of ideas fixes upon the mind, all other intellectual gratifications are rejected: the mind in weariness or leisure recurs constantly to the favorite conception and feasts on the luscious falsehood, whenever it is offended with the bitterness of truth. By degrees the reign of fancy is confirmed. She grows first imperious and, in time, despotic. These fictions begin to operate as realities, false opinions fasten upon the mind, and life passes in dreams of rapture or of anguish.

Dr. Winslow speaks on the same subject as follows:—

> An attentive observer, tracing the first period of the evolution of a fixed idea, witnesses one of the most curious spectacles imaginable. He sees a man the prey of a disposition imposed by insanity, striving from time to time to rid himself of it, but ever falling back under its tyrannical influence, and constrained by the laws of his mind to seek for some form under which to give it a body and a definite existence. He will be seen successively to adopt and to repel divers ideas which present themselves to him and laboriously striving to deliver himself of a delirium which shall be the expression, the exact image of an internal condition, of which he himself, after all, suspects not the existence. This first phase in the evolution of the fixed idea, this gradual and progressive creation of delirium, constitutes the period of incubation of insanity.

In insanity, too, the psychical faculties are first exalted. Tasso composed his most eloquent and impassioned verses during paroxysms of insanity. Lucretious wrote his immortal poem, 'De rerum Natura,' when suffering from an attack of mental aberration. Alexander Cruden compiled his 'Concordance' whilst insane. Some of the ablest articles in "Aiken's Biography" were written by a patient in a lunatic asylum. The perceptive faculties also, are, in the insane, first exalted

and then perverted. Illusions of the senses and delusions of the mind are sometimes noticed among the incipient symptoms of acute affections of the encephalon, finally insanity and other cerebral diseases often manifest themselves, in their early stages, by exaltations and perversions of the moral sense.

These two states of the mind, then, are found to be closely related to each other. There is only a single step intervening between the 'sublime' and the 'ridiculous,' and that step is self-control. Directly the will ceases to exercise a proper influence over the understanding and the emotions, the mind loses its healthy balancing power. In insanity the power of self-control is weakened or altogether lost by a voluntary and criminal indulgence of a train of thought which it was the duty of the individual, in the first instance, to resolutely battle with, control and subdue. But in the practice of concentration, the power of self-control is immeasurably enhanced. Evil thoughts are never allowed to cast their phantasmal shade across the clear mental horizon. But if this practice be carried out without due regard being paid to the collateral subjects of self-purification and unselfishness, and without the guidance of a master, the chances are that the mental equilibrium is overturned and it degenerates into the ridiculous.

Religious fanaticism, sectarian bigotry, superstition and credulity are the natural outcome of a want of self-control. How important it is to trace the connexion between a total want of sensibility in regard to those impressions which affect the salvation of man from misery and bondage, and a super-exalted sensibility in regard to such matters. Both are, to a great extent, dependent on certain unhealthy conditions of the body. In my opinion, the attention of the physician should be particularly directed to the physical condition of the functions of organic life, when he witnesses instances of a specially exalted or depressed condition of the religious feelings, not clearly traceable to the operation of the sixth principle in man. I am aware that there is a disposition on the part of those who take an ultra spiritual view of the mind's operations to exaggerate truths which ultimately grow into dangerous lies. * * *

Self-control, then, is the prime factor which serves to distinguish the 'sublime' from the 'ridiculous' and to keep the mind within legitimate bounds. But in order to ensure success in the practice of concentration of the mind, it were well to have a clear conception of the

import of the term self-control. It is not enough merely to keep control over this or that passion, over this or that wrongful action, but by self-control we should learn to keep complete and full control over all the passions, evil thoughts, and deeds that together form our lower nature. There is nothing so difficult as to keep constant and unremitting watch and ward over our ignoble self. The practice of negative virtues is none the less serious or difficult than the performance of active charity and benevolence. If we relax the stern wakefulness of the reason and will—even for a single moment—if we allow the insidious advances of even one impure thought for a single moment, there is no knowing into what ignoble depths we may be hurled.

Once admission is granted to an unhallowed sentiment, it seldom fails to take root in congenial soil. Man being a composition of the Seraph and the Beast, what heart has been, at all times, free from malevolent passion, revengeful emotion, lustful feeling, unnatural and, alas! devilish impulses? Is not every bosom polluted by a dark leprous spot, corroding ulcer or centre of moral gangrene? Does there not cling to every mind some melancholy reminiscence of the past which throws, at times, a sombre shade over the chequered path of life? We may flatter our pharisaical vanity and human pride by affirming that we are free from these melancholy conditions of moral suffering and sad states of mental infirmity, but we should be belying human nature if we were to ignore the existence of such, perhaps only temporary, evanescent and paroxysmal conditions of unhealthy thoughts and phases of passion.

There are four great obstacles that stand in the way of the practice of concentration of thought, and these are termed in Sanskrit (1) *Bikshepa,* (2) *Rasaswadan,* (3) *Kashaya,* and (4) *Laya.*

(1) *Bikshepa* is that natural tendency of the mind which makes it ever and anon fly from a fixed point. This habitually diffusive tendency of the mind is one of the causes of our bondage. The practice of concentration is recommended in our *Shastras,* with the primary object of counteracting this evil tendency. But the apparently insurmountable nature of this tendency is never manifested so strongly as when we try to battle with it. Every beginner knows how frequently his mind unconsciously wanders away from the groove wherein he

has been so assiduously striving to keep it. Exert yourself to the best of your endeavors to keep the image standing clearly before you, it gets blurred and indistinct in almost no time, and you find, to your utter discomfiture, the mind diverted into quite an unexpected and unlooked-for channel. The channels through which the mind thus slips away stealthily, afford it impressions either of pleasurable or painful character, and according to the predominance of the one or the other, the second and third obstacles are said to present themselves.

(2) *Rasaswadan,* therefore, is that state of mind in which it broods over pleasurable ideas. Our mind is in such intimate sympathy with those impressions which are called pleasurable, that when it once reverts to a train of similar ideas, it is very hard to turn it away from them and fasten it upon the point from whence it wandered.

(3) *Kashaya,* again, is that condition in which the mind is lost in the recollection of unpleasant thoughts—thoughts whose withering influence and death-like shadow over the mind, have been many a time the cause of blighting, saddening and often crushing the best, kindest and noblest of human hearts!

(4) The last, though not the least, of the obstacles to abstract contemplation and concentration of thoughts, is what is termed *Laya* or passivity of the mind.

In fact all these obstacles might be reduced to two categories of (1) *Bikshepa* and (2) *Laya, i.e.,* diversion of the attention, and total passivity of the mind—the other two being included in the first. *Laya* or passivity of the mind is that state in which the mind is a perfect blank, and which, if continued for a short time, merges into sleep. This state of the mind, if induced during contemplation, is replete with dangers and should be perseveringly guarded against. It is a state which presents an opportunity to any passing elementary, or what is worse, it may offer the best conductivity to the 'magnetism of evil.' The best remedy against all these obstacles is an iron will to overcome them, and a dogged and persistent drill and discipline of the mind in the shape of the daily and intelligent observance of our *Nitya Karma.*

SREE KSHIROD SARMA, F. T. S.

ON THE LOOKOUT

Diary in India

Hilda Wernher, author of *My Indian Family,* and several other books on India, has added a worthwhile newcomer to her list, in the form of an intermittent diary of her life there, entitled *My Indian Son-in-law.* Miss Wernher first became acquainted with India and her people through the marriage of her daughter to a high-class Muslim. Herself a devout though non-sectarian Christian, Miss Wernher took the opportunity offered by her new surroundings to become acquainted with Hindu and Moslem religions and traditions, and throughout the book shows a tolerance and respect for other religions which does credit to her own beliefs. When her daughter was killed in an accident shortly after her marriage, her son-in-law asked her to stay on with him, and see him settled with a new wife, as was the Moslem custom. Miss Wernher consented, and conquered her revulsion at her son-in-law's seeming callousness in remarrying so soon after his wife's death by the realization that in different cultures, different customs prevail, and that haste in remarriage meant no disrespect to herself or her daughter.

Indeed, the support and help she rendered her son-in-law—unprecedented even in a Hindu or a Moslem mother, and certainly not expected of a mere White Woman—earned her the love and gratitude of the whole community, so that through the loss of her own daughter, she gained a host of men and women who henceforth called her "Mother," and who returned her act of devotion and tolerance a hundredfold.

Thoughts Are Realities

That Miss Wernher often shares the subtle concepts of Eastern thought is made clear in many passages throughout the book. Here is one such reflection, stimulated by a sudden wonder at the "miracle" of the postal service, which carries a part of ourselves wherever we wish to send it. "Throughout my life I've felt these sudden outbursts of gratitude," she observes, implying further that such reciprocal exchanges between man and all other portions of the cosmos are a necessary part of the full and happy life—certainly a pantheistic doctrine:

So-called lifeless objects have a life all their own. It has frequently been stated by printers that if they happen to be bad-tempered or nervous, their machines get tricky, whereas even temper and positive thoughts make for faultless functioning. Other mechanics have, occasionally, mentioned the same experience.

I believe in this. Ill-tempered people always seem beset by various contretemps. Thoughts are realities. They're not only felt by our relatives, friends, employees, employers, and so on, and above all by our children; not only by plants and animals—expressions like "a green thumb" or "a lucky hand for animals" point to even temper and loving-kindness in dealing with the vegetable and animal kingdoms—but thoughts are also felt by so-called lifeless machines. We should remember this and give gratitude where gratitude is due, everywhere.

"IN TUNE WITH THE UNIVERSE"

In the course of a conversation with a few Brahman friends, the question arose of what there is in India which gives its people equilibrium and mental stability in spite of economic and social handicaps which seem monstrous to Westerners. The aspects of political tensions and lack of a daily-life religion were touched on by the two "westernized" Hindus—one a well-known economist—but it was Miss Wernher who seems to have brought home the central point. Speaking of the Western concept of a high standard of living, and its accompanying horror of keeping-up-with-the-Joneses, she remarked that "striving for exclusively material security begets mental insecurity"—

"Souls certainly do not starve in India. Do you remember the people of Sitapur—their dignity and gladness in spite of abject poverty? . . . They don't know the philosophy, but they *live* it! Naturally it is at the bottom of the 'soul-feeding' quality I've mentioned. Hindu philosophy is a magnificent gateway for the development of the individual soul, whether people know the Gita or not."

Remarking that Western civilization has consistently striven to abolish man's concordance with the natural seasons, until strawberries in December and cucumbers in January are commonplaces, Miss Wernher stresses the fact that life in India is based on rhythm, the rhythm of the seasons, and the rhythm of traditional festivals of nature. Even in eating habits, this harmony is observed, certain foods being served only in the seasons appropriate to them. "The concord-

ance between the rhythms of nature and the rhythms of man's life," she concludes, "makes for peace of mind and tranquility."

"Thus Mutually Nourishing"

Not, of course, that a natural diet will in itself bring mental balance and calmness, but it reflects, as do other aspects of Indian life, a fundamental attitude of "working on with Nature," by which even the humblest man feels a kinship with the universe, sun, stars and nature forces. The sacredness of the cow, in the eyes of the Hindu, springs not from ignorant animal worship, but from a sacrificial worship or reverence for the bountiful productivity of all Nature, and a recognition that such beneficent prodigality should be repaid by "nourishing the Gods," as described in the *Gita* (III).

Miss Wernher inquired of her Brahman friends the meaning and process of the *havan* ceremony, and enters a description of it in their own words in her diary:

> "There is an earthenware bowl in the puja [worship] room. In the morning, after our bath, we kindle fire in the bowl, fire made from twigs. Then we throw various things into the flame—butter, wheat and barley or rice still in its husks, oil, fragrant spices and the like, and see them burn. . . . Havan is performed so as to purify the atmosphere. Man pollutes it all the time, inhaling ozone, exhaling carbonic acid. Thus it is his religious duty to restore the purity of air. . . . Through the purifying quality of fire, man restores to the Universe what the Universe bestows on him."

This is a ceremony, a worship with sacrifice, a kind of cosmic meditation, which the Hindu religion imposes on every Hindu as a daily duty, but the custom has now largely lapsed, at least with many educated Hindus, as have many other "superstitions" in many other countries, under the bright white enlightenment of Western materialism. Yet, as Wm. Q. Judge remarks in his "Conversations on Occultism," traditions are stored and perpetuated by the great mass of common people, who sink deep roots into them, while their more intellectual brothers subsist uncertainly on changing philosophies.

On Comparative Religions

Miss Wernher's studies of the Indian religions brought her to a discovery which has been the reward of all real students of this subject. As she expresses it—

Preparing my broadcasts about comparative religion, I am, as always, awed and delighted by the synthesis behind the analysis. It is amazing how men of various races and creeds have had exactly identical spiritual experiences.

Mystics are the same all over the earth. Their realm does not differentiate East and West. Only God matters to them, and His realization.

It is fascinating to compare the *Mahabharata* and the *Iliad* or the *Ramayana* and the *Odyssey*. In many ways they are almost incredibly similar—not because their authors, or, rather, those who handed down the two epics, met and exchanged ideas, but because the same problems stirred mankind in various parts of the world in the same epoch.

. . . There's that Muslim mystic of the twelfth century, Almansor ibn Allaj. He has often been compared to Meister Eckhart of thirteenth-century Middle Europe, and especially to the latter's disciple, Johannes Tauler: both the Muslim and the medieval Christian mystic speak of the birth of God within the human soul in almost identical terms.

"KEEPERS OF MANKIND'S GRATITUDE"

Perhaps the central theme running through *My Indian Son-in-law* is the conviction that peoples with widely differing cultural traditions and habits of living can prove mutually tolerant, and by their friendly intercourse, enrich each other's lives. Such a faith, certainly, is basic to America, the so-called "melting pot of nations," though it may at times seem threatened with extinction by the sectarian feelings encouraged by political and religious *isms*. Miss Wernher has this to say of the benefits accruing to her from her association with the Indian people:

"What has always impressed me most is that, somehow, Indians are the keepers of mankind's gratitude. Almost the whole burden falls on them, because everybody else has forgotten about being grateful. Men take and take, from earth and plants and animals—ravaging, exploiting, and never giving anything in return, neither thoughts nor thanks. Why do Hindus regard the cow as something sacred? Not because of any fetishism or sentimentality, as the West often holds, but because they feel that the cow, whose milk is mankind's most perfect and wholesome food, gives it unselfishly and without reward. Gratitude is due to her. And so on. There are innumerable ways in which Indians pay tribute to the bounty the

Universe bestows on us—it always seems to me they do it for the whole of mankind. So I am deeply grateful to them."

75,000-Year-Old-Man

Skeletons of three men presumed to have lived some 75,000 years ago have been recovered from a cave near the North Iranian village of Turujan, about three miles from the Caspian Sea. While there has not yet been time to fully evaluate and substantiate the findings, Dr. Carleton S. Coon, curator of the Mediterranean and Far Eastern section of the University of Pennsylvania Museum, who discovered the skeletons, says that geological evidence found at the scene indicates that the men lived "at about the same time or even before such sub-human species as the Neanderthal Man." (New York *Herald-Tribune,* April 28.) According to Dr. Coon, the discovery indicates that a true human being (Homo sapiens) existed at the same time as the cruder species. This was a favorite contention of H. P. Blavatsky in both her *Isis Unveiled* and her *Secret Doctrine.* It is as ridiculous, H.P.B. pointed out, to urge support of the Darwinian theory of evolution by generalizing on the ground that lower strata reveal more primitive human remains and ignoring the frequent exceptions to this rule, as it would be for some archaeologist of the distant future to conclude that mankind in the nineteenth century was "just emerging from the Stone Age" when he had merely excavated the domestic implements of one of our Indian or Andaman Island tribes (*Isis* I, 4). Certainly, if Dr. Coon's theory is borne out by subsequent examination and research, it will be another powerful shot at the crumbling walls of Darwinian materialism.

"Giving Fun by Making Fun"

The Ladies, God Bless 'em! by Helen E. Hokinson is a posthumous volume published in 1950, the year after the author's tragic death, at 50, in an airplane accident. Several tributes to Miss Hokinson are included, and the artist emerges as a humorist with a remarkable capacity for charity and considerateness, a cartoonist of gentle breeding and friendly good taste. John Mason Brown, New York drama critic, sums up the Hokinson characters and their creator's special talent as follows:

Foolish and self-indulgent as they were, they were never guilty of meanness. They were a friendly breed. This explains why they

> made so many friends. Miss Hokinson's fondness for them was transparent and contagious. Hers was the rarest of satiric gifts. She had no contempt for human failings. She could ridicule without wounding. She could give fun by making fun, and in the process made no enemies.

In the second memoir, by her collaborator and caption-writer of many years' standing, James Reid Parker, we learn that "if Helen regarded the small frustrations and humiliations of life as comic, as her drawings prove that she did, I must record that she never for one moment lacked respect for the fact that to the person involved they are always deadly serious, if only temporarily."

THE "CONTEST OF SMILES"

The *New Yorker* editors themselves, on the occasion of Miss Hokinson's sudden death, looked back over the 25 years of their association with her, and found her a distinguished exception to the rule that humor hits its mark only with the barbed arrow of wit:

> If satire is defined as an exposure of anyone's weakness, she was not a satirist at all, or even a humorist, if there is any implication of harshness in that. Her work was the product of loving observation and a boundless delight in all absurdity, none more than that she found in herself, and the pleasure she gave other people was really a reflection of her own.

It was said of H. T. Webster, the creator of "The Timid Soul," "Life's Darkest Moment," and other vignettes of average American life, that his gentleness "is the innocence of a man whose powers of observation are limited by his kindness." (*Time,* Nov. 26, 1945.) The same is true of Helen E. Hokinson. There seems to be some releasing magic in the humor of such modest geniuses as these two. If a sense of humor is one expression of the sense of fitness, one aspect of philosophical detachment, we can wish for more cartoonists with a capacity for giving genuine amusement. These are the natural-born psychologists who will help undo the average man and woman —together with the Superior Person and the humble Milquetoasts— from sad absorption with their follies and fears, and, most of all, from the feeling that, being ordinary people, they can never amount to much. Krishna, "tenderly smiling," is assuredly on the side of all who go to prove that Life "is a contest of smiles if we really know our business," in the words of William Q. Judge.

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